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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

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INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE

RUEKJCS/OSD WASHINGTON DC

RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHINGTON DC

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

RHMFIUU/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL

RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC

RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC

RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC 0438

RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 4005

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 001448

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR F, SCA/FO, SCA/RA, AND SCA/A

PASS AID/A JKUNDER, ANE MWARD

PASS OPIC AND TDA

CENTCOM FOR CG CSTC-A

NSC FOR AHARRIMAN, BCAMP

TREASURY PASS TO LMCDONALD, ABAUKOL, AND JCIORCIARI

OSD FOR BREZINZSKI

COMMERCE FOR DEES

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

SIPDIS

E.O.12958: N/A

TAGS: [EINV](#) [EFIN](#) [ENRG](#) [ETRD](#) [ECON](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: DOLE CEO'S VISIT TO KABUL

SUMMARY

¶1. (SBU) Mr. David Murdock, CEO, Chairman and Owner of Dole Foods Company, visited Afghanistan from April 21-24, 2007 at the request of President Bush. He toured productive agricultural areas of Afghanistan in Parwan and Balkh provinces and was joined by Ambassador Wood at two meetings with President Karzai to discuss potential Dole investments in Afghanistan. Murdock expressed interest in investing Dole resources to develop productive enterprises in five areas: fruit and vegetable canning, marble mining, carpet cutting and washing, cashmere processing, and caracul processing. End summary.

DOLE TOUR OF AFGHANISTAN

¶2. (SBU) David Murdock visited Afghanistan with Danko Stambuk, Dole Senior Vice President of Manufacturing, and Jaime Villacorta, Dole Director of Agricultural Operations. For part of the trip he was joined by OPIC President Rob Mosbacher. The visit was timed to coincide with the Ministry of Agriculture's U.S.-assisted AgFair, a three-day event for agricultural buyers, sellers and organizations at a newly constructed fairground containing 200 display booths and permanent fairground structures. The AgFair received local and international media coverage and was attended by approximately 30,000 Afghan visitors. Murdock visited the AgFair site and later told President Karzai that he wanted to develop a 300 acre, high tech teaching farm on the GoA land adjacent to the AgFair site and dedicate the farm on his next visit to Afghanistan.

¶3. (SBU) Murdock, the Dole vice presidents, USAID/ANE Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator Mark Ward, and USAID/Afghanistan Mission Director Leon "Skip" Waskin met with Major General Rodriguez, Commander of CJTF-82 before touring vineyards and a vegetable dehydration plant in the Charikar/Bagram area. The following day, the same group toured north Afghanistan by air and also met with the Mazar-i-Sharif PRT commander and the Governor. Murdock was

impressed with the economic potential of the Mazar-i-Sharif area and northern Afghanistan.

MEETING WITH KARZAI

14. (SBU) Murdock and Ambassador Wood met with President Karzai on two occasions during his four-day trip. At the second meeting, Murdock explained his thoughts and opinions on developing major investment activities in Afghanistan. In terms of land, Murdock expressed interest in large areas of good land (10,000+ acres) with plenty of available water such as that found around Kunduz and Balkh (in the north). President Karzai expressed his full support for Murdock's proposals and committed that the GOA would provide any land that was needed, although specific terms were not discussed.

15. (SBU) Murdock also expressed interest in five areas of business development: 1) large scale canning operations for vegetables and fruit including refrigeration containers and all related logistics services needed for large scale contract farming; 2) modern marble mining operations including diamond-bladed cutting tools and modern marble finishing to take place in Afghanistan; 3) one or more modern carpet cutting and washing plants to produce finished carpets from those already produced by hand in Afghanistan; 4) a cashmere processing plant to produce finished cashmere products so that Afghan producers can make more money; 5) a karakul (soft wool) processing plant. Karzai promised full support for all the activities mentioned by Murdock including the legal establishment of Dole Foods Inc. in Afghanistan and the commitment of government land.

DOLE JOB CREATION

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16. (SBU) Murdock offered to invest in Afghanistan immediately to create 10,000 or more jobs given the conditions that the Government of Afghanistan would support his efforts by providing the available land both to Dole and to contract farmers with clear titles. Dole would need the land to build the five processing plants described above. Murdock also expressed his desire to start very quickly and announce something in the next few months. Murdock spoke of bringing in computer controlled, state of the art equipment for each separate industry. Murdock spoke of creating 10,000 jobs in the first three years and 20,000 soon after that.

FUTURE VISITS

17. (SBU) Murdock expressed his intention to return soon to Afghanistan on condition that he be allowed to land his private plane in any airport in the country. Karzai promised that Murdock could land his plane at any of the international airports in the country. Murdock and Karzai discussed markets in Central Asia, Pakistan and India as well as other possible production areas including Jalalabad, Herat, Parwan, and Kandahar. Murdock and Karzai agreed that all these areas would be explored during Murdock's next visit. Murdock concluded by confirming his intention to review these plans with President Bush in person upon his return to the United States. Murdock and Karzai agreed that the planting of the teaching farm at the AgFair site should begin immediately and that an advance team should precede Murdock's next visit. Murdock expressed high interest in returning in the next two months and personally visiting all the marble mines, carpet processing centers, cashmere processing centers and karakul processing centers to better understand the needs and to begin planning for investments immediately.

COMMENT

¶8. (SBU) Murdock's plans fit very well with the USG's commercial agriculture development strategy for Afghanistan and especially with the planned expansion of the Alternative Livelihoods Program to the northwest. As both projects progress, USAID will coordinate closely with Dole to promote the greatest public-private synergies possible in a formal, or perhaps informal, alliance. End comment.

WOOD